

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 02272 261300Z

63

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-05 SSO-00 /079 W

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R 260949Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3362

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 2272

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT EAGR PFOR PGOV

SUBJECT: REPORTED DEFECTION OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

1. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTED REUTER'S AND OTHER WIRE SERVICES' STORIES OF "DEFECTION" ETHIOPIAN MINAG, DR. DAGNATCHEW YIRGU, TO KHARTOUM.

2. FACTS THUS FAR AVAILABLE TO US ARE AS FOLLOWS: DR. TSAGGA AMLAK WORKU, DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION, TOLD MISSION OFFICER THAT DR. DAGNATCHEW TOOK FIELD TRIP WITH MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF TO NEW AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AREA BETWEEN NEKEMPTE AND GIMBI, DEPARTING ADDIS FEBRUARY 10 BY CAR. FIELD TRIP WAS COMPLETED FEBRUARY 13 AND PARTY RETURNED TO NEKEMPTE. MINAG THEREUPON DIRECTED HIS STAFF TO RETURN TO ADDIS, SAYING HE WOULD SPEND ADDITIONAL DAY IN NEKEMPTE TO MEET WITH REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL OFFICER. MINISTER ADDED HE WOULD THEREAFTER RETURN BY
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 02272 261300Z

COMMERCIAL BUS TO CAPITAL.

WHEN REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL OFFICER CALLED AT DR. DAGNATCHEW'S HOTEL FEBRUARY 14 TO TAKE HIM TO BUS STATION, MINAG COULD NOT BE LOCATED. POLICE SEARCH ENSUED WITHOUT RESULT.

DR. TSAGGA AND OTHER MINAG SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT DR. DAGNATCHEW HAD WRITTEN LETTERS PRIOR TO THIS FIELD TRIP IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH CURRENT EPMG. REPORTEDLY, HE WROTE LETTER TO PMAC EXPLAINING HE COULD NOT CONTINUE SUPPORT "DICTATORIAL GOVERNMENT." HE HAD, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, EXPRESSED PREVIOUSLY TO US HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH VARIOUS PMAC DECISIONS, FOR EXAMPLE ON PRICE CONTROL, ON WHICH MINAG WAS BYPASSED.

3. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD FROM SOURCES IN MINAG THAT IN ONE OF HIS LETTERS, DR. DAGNATCHEW SAID IN ESSENCE THAT HE COULD NOT CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE PMAC AND INTENDED TO GO ABROAD OR DIE IN THE ATTEMPT. WORD AROUND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IS THAT DAGNATCHEW IS IN THE SUDAN, BUT WE HAVE NO COLLATERAL ON THAT POINT.

4. NEWLY APPOINTED CHIEF AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER IN MINISTRY OF NATIONAL RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS THAT HIS SUCCESSOR ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION, AN ERITREAN, HAS DEFECTED TO THE ELF ALONG WITH TWO OTHER ERITREANS; THEY HAVE TAKEN A MINISTRY VEHICLE WITH THEM.

5. RELIABLE MINAG SOURCE REPORTS THAT EPID EXTENSION WORKERS IN DIRE DAWA TOOK EPID VEHICLE AND DEFECTED TO ELF VIA THE AFAR, PICKING UP SEVERAL OTHER ERITREANS EN ROUTE.
WYMAN

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